

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 JAKART 09118 101033Z
ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9986
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMCONSUL MEDAN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMCONSUL SURABAYA
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

S E C R E T JAKARTA 9118

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PROP, PINS, UR, ID
SUBJECT: SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN INDONESIA

REF: JAKARTA A-130 (11/9/77)

1. SUMMARY: THE SOVIETS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN INCREASINGLY ACTIVE IN MANY FIELDS IN AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE GOI, AND HAVE BEEN ASSISTED BY CORRESPONDING EFFORTS ON THE PART OF THEIR EASTERN EUROPEAN ALLIES. CULTURAL EXCHANGES HAVE BEEN LIMITED, BUT TRADE WITH THE SOVIET BLOC HAS BEEN INCREASED. THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN VERY ACTIVE AND PERSISTENT IN SEEKING CONTACTS WITH GOI OFFICIALS AND HAVE EXPANDED THEIR INFORMATION PROGRAM THROUGH THE LOCAL PRESS. THEY HAVE TENDED TO AVOID MOST DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, HOWEVER, LEAVING IT TO THE EASTERN EUROPEANS TO

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 JAKART 09118 101033Z

REPRESENT THEIR SIDE. INDONESIANS CONTINUE TO BE SUSPICIOUS OF SOVIET AIMS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN RECENT MONTHS THE SOVIETS AND THEIR ALLIES HAVE STEPPED UP THEIR EFFORTS TO EXPAND THEIR INFLUENCE IN INDONESIA. THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN A NUMBER OF FIELDS, INCLUDING TRADE, CULTURAL EXCHANGES, AND SPORTS,

IN ATTEMPTING TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE INDONESIANS. THEY HAVE ALSO RELIED HEAVILY ON THEIR EASTERN EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES TO CARRY THE BALL FOR THE SOVIET BLOC WHEN THEIR OWN EFFORTS HAVE YIELDED LITTLE PROGRESS BECAUSE OF INDONESIAN SUSPICIONS OF THEIR MOTIVES.

3. FOR SOME TIME THE SOVIETS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO BRING RUSSIAN CULTURAL GROUPS TO INDONESIA, BUT THE GOI RESPONSE HAS BEEN NEGATIVE, LARGELY BECAUSE OF SUSPICION THAT THE GROUPS WILL CONTAIN ESPIONAGE OR SUBVERSIVE AGENTS. THE GOI WAS PERSUADED, HOWEVER, TO SEND TWO BATIK EXPERTS TO THE SOVIET UNION FOR A BRIEF VISIT THIS YEAR. BOTH THE SOVIETS AND THE EASTERN EUROPEANS HAVE PLACED FREQUENT ARTICLES IN JAKARTA NEWSPAPERS DURING THE LAST YEAR COMMENTED THIS WITH A CONSISTENT ANTI-CHINESE LINE IN THEIR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMENTS.

4. TRADE BETWEEN INDONESIA AND THE SOVIET BLOC COUNTRIES HAS BEEN ON THE INCREASE IN RECENT YEARS AS THE BLOC'S TRADE TERMS BECOME MORE ATTRACTIVE BY COMPARISON WITH RISING PRICES IN THE WEST. SOVIET TRADE REPRESENTATIVE BARTSEV TOLD THE PRESS HERE JUNE 29 THAT THE VOLUME OF TRADE BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND INDONESIA DURING THE LAST TWO YEARS WAS INCREASINGLY FAVORABLE TO INDONESIA. THE SOVIETS HAVE HAD AN EXHIBIT AT THE ANNUAL JAKARTA FAIR SINCE 1974, AND THIS YEAR'S EXHIBIT FEATURES MACHINES FOR TEXTILE
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 JAKART 09118 101033Z

FACTORIES, AUTOMOBILES, AND MOTORCYCLES ASSEMBLED IN INDONESIA. THEY PLAN TO HOLD A TRADE SHOW OF THEIR OWN IN APRIL 1979. BOTH HUNGARY AND EAST GERMANY PLAN TO ASSIGN ADDITIONAL COMMERCIAL OFFICERS AT THEIR JAKARTA EMBASSIES.

5. SOVIET DIPLOMATS HAVE BEEN DELUGING OFFICIALS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS WITH INVITATIONS TO VARIOUS FUNCTIONS, USUALLY WITH LIMITED SUCCESS, BUT THEIR VERY PERSISTENCE HAS IN MANY CASES BROKEN DOWN INDONESIAN RELUCTANCE. THE EASTERN EUROPEANS HAVE ALSO BEEN ACTIVE IN THIS RESPECT. SOVIET CONSULATE STAFFS IN MEDAN AND SURABAYA HAVE BEEN FAIRLY ACTIVE, PARTICULARLY IN BROADENING THEIR CONTACTS WITH STUDENTS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND SOVIET AMBASSADOR SHPEDKO HAS MADE AN EXTENSIVE VISIT TO VARIOUS LOCALITIES IN SUMATRA. IN DIPLOMATIC SOCIAL CIRCLES, HOWEVER, THE RUSSIANS HAVE BEEN CONSPICUOUS BY THEIR ABSENCE IN RECENT WEEKS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF PRO FORMA ATTENDANCE BY THEIR AMBASSADOR AT MAJOR FUNCTIONS. THEY HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY REPLACED, PROBABLY BY DESIGN, BY THE EASTERN EUROPEANS, WHO REMAIN CORDIAL TO ALL IN SPITE OF THE DECREASING WARMTH OF U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS.

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